Opinion



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The noose begins to tighten around President Donald Trump's neck. With former national security adviser Michael Flynn pleading guilty and cooperating with special counsel Robert Mueller, the investigation into ties between the Trump campaign and Russia is picking up speed.

There are so many reasons why it is time for Trump to vacate his office. The most pressing is the crisis in North Korea. Trump's national security adviser is now saying that we are drawing closer to war with North Korea every day. Any reasonable attempt at diplomacy seems off the table. The danger of Trump and his unpredictable nature should be sufficient cause for the Washington establishment to find a way to remove him from office.

ABC News highlights a number of recent controversies that lead one to question to what extent the president's behavior is normal. And Ezra Klein believes the behavior of the current occupant of the White House is sufficient to move toward impeachment.

I agree with Klein, but I don't see the kind of movement in Congress that would be necessary to make this happen. Republicans in Congress are still wedded to this

president, and even with the passage of the tax bill in the Senate, they don't seem ready to shed their ties to Trump.

I'm not sure what it will take, but I contend that this is not and should not be about partisan politics. It is not about Republicans and Democrats. In fact, if Trump were to leave office tomorrow, it would be a far bigger boon for Republicans than it would for Democrats: Democrats would be running against Trump in the 2020 presidential election, and his removal from office would make that difficult or impossible.

Vice President Mike Pence would ascend to the presidency. He is a very conservative politician. He is steadier than Trump and more likely to successfully pass a conservative Republican agenda. Also, it would give him more than two years to serve as president before needing to run again in 2020. This would give him an enormous advantage to prepare a winning campaign.

Even if the vice president were to get caught up in the Russian investigation and become unable to serve, the mantel would fall to Paul Ryan, the current Speaker of the House. He too is a conservative Republican who Republicans should be only too happy to see take over the White House.

As a progressive, I am fearful of either Pence or Ryan succeeding Trump, but we can't continue with someone so unfit to serve in that office. His presence is dangerous to our country. He is demeaning the office. He is damaging our standing overseas. Every time he speaks or tweets, he adds to the problem. His comments all too frequently bear no resemblance to truth. His retweets of hateful Muslim videos are seen as outrageous, even by the British government.

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So how do we best and most quickly remove him from office? I disagree with Klein that impeachment is the way to go. It is a long and cumbersome process, and much damage is likely to be done to our country in the meantime. No one seems to know how or whether to use the 25th Amendment, which states a president can be removed if "unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office."

I believe resignation is the way to go. If it is successful, he could be gone immediately. We need someone to go into the White House and tell Trump it is time to go, like Barry Goldwater did to President Richard Nixon in 1974. A cadre of

important Republican politicians, likely to include senators John McCain and Lindsey Graham, need to explain the advantages of resignation to Trump.

It would take some of the pressure off the Russian investigation. The next president could even pardon him and his family. He could go off to his golf resorts and enjoy life. He would not be tied down to the tedium of daily presidential duties. I think he might find such an outcome pretty attractive. He could go back to being king in his own fiefdom.

The country could then return to standing for decency, principle, an effort to achieve equality for all, freedom of the press, and an independent judiciary.

We are by no means a perfect country, but President Trump is not in the ballpark of what is normal or appropriate behavior for the president of the United States of America.